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Tuesday 21 February 2017

Standing Committee on
Government Agencies

Intended appointments

Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Deuxième session, 41^e législature

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Mardi 21 février 2017

Comité permanent des
organismes gouvernementaux

Nominations prévues



Chair: Cristina Martins
Clerk: Sylwia Przezdziecki

Présidente : Cristina Martins
Greffière : Sylwia Przezdziecki

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Tuesday 21 February 2017

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

COMITÉ PERMANENT DES
ORGANISMES GOUVERNEMENTAUX

Mardi 21 février 2017

The committee met at 0900 in committee room 2.

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Sylwia Przezdziecki): Good morning, honourable members, and welcome to the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Owing to the absence of both the Chair and the Vice-Chair, it is my duty to call upon you to elect an Acting Chair. Are there any nominations? Mr. Qaadri.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: I would nominate my honourable colleague Amrit Mangat to be Acting Chair of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies.

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Sylwia Przezdziecki): Mrs. Mangat, do you accept the nomination?

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Yes.

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Sylwia Przezdziecki): Are there any further nominations? There being no further nominations, I declare nominations closed and Mrs. Mangat duly elected Acting Chair of the committee. Would you please come up and take the chair?

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Amrit Mangat): Good morning, everyone. Thank you very much for appointing me Acting Chair. Before we begin our intended appointments review, our first order of business is to consider four subcommittee reports.

The subcommittee report dated December 15, 2016: Would someone please move adoption of the report?

Mr. Wayne Gates: I move the adoption of the subcommittee report on intended appointments dated Thursday, December 15, 2016.

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Amrit Mangat): Any discussion? No? All in favour? It's approved. I move the adoption of the report.

The subcommittee report dated December 22, 2016: Would someone please move adoption of the report?

Mr. Wayne Gates: I move the adoption of the subcommittee report on intended appointments dated Thursday, December 22, 2016.

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Amrit Mangat): Any discussion? All in favour or opposed? I will move the adoption of the report.

The subcommittee report dated January 26, 2017: Would someone please move adoption of the report? Mr. Pettapiece.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I move the adoption of the subcommittee report on intended appointments dated Thursday, January 26, 2017.

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Amrit Mangat): Any discussion? All in favour? The motion is carried.

The subcommittee report dated February 9, 2017: Would someone please move—

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I move the adoption of the subcommittee report dated Thursday, February 9, 2017.

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Amrit Mangat): Any discussion? All in favour? Carried.

We will now move to the appointments review. We have two intended appointments to hear from. We will consider the concurrences following the interviews.

INTENDED APPOINTMENTS

MR. JOHN WILSON

Review of intended appointment, selected by Official Opposition: John Wilson, intended appointee as member and vice-chair, Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Appeal Tribunal; and member, Board of Negotiation.

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Amrit Mangat):

Welcome, Mr. Wilson. Thank you very much for being here. You may begin with a brief statement, if you wish. Members of each party will have 10 minutes to ask you questions. Any time used for your statement will be deducted from the government's time for questions,

You can start, sir,

Mr. John Wilson: Thank you, Madam Chair and members of the committee.

I've long been interested in agriculture and rural affairs and their interface with the law. While at law school in Windsor many years ago, in addition to the more conventional courses, I studied both municipal and land-use planning law with an emphasis on the rural context, including papers on the local initiative measures, including those provided for in the Drainage Act, which is under the jurisdiction of the tribunal.

Shortly after being called to the bar, I also began a career in agriculture, running a cow-calf and cash-crop operation in southern Bruce county. Although the cows are long gone, the experience gave me a visceral understanding of the challenges of agriculture while offering an interesting counterpoint to the practice of law.

In the intervening years, the focus of my legal practice changed to mediation, arbitration and adjudication. To

that end, I completed a variety of courses to be recognized as a mediator, a family mediator and a private arbitrator. As a private arbitrator, I was responsible for case-managing disputes through the litigation process, setting up the arbitration hearing and, ultimately, writing a decision disposing of the issues in dispute.

Building on these skill sets, I joined the Financial Services Commission of Ontario as a full-time arbitrator, hearing accident and benefit disputes under the authority of the Insurance Act. While the pre-hearing process of the commission expanded on my mediation and case-management experience, the arbitration hearing process sharpened my adjudicative skills. Lengthy formal hearings on complex subjects with experienced counsel required good listening and hearing management skills, as well as an ongoing knowledge of administrative and insurance law.

In the context of my work at the financial services commission, I was certified by the Ontario public service as bilingual and held hearings and pre-hearings in French as well as in English.

In the administrative tribunal context, I've also worked as a lawyer member of the Consent and Capacity Board, hearing appeals from involuntary hospitalization under the Mental Health Act, as well as various other matters arising from the Substitute Decisions Act and the Health Care Consent Act.

These hearings were the antithesis of the complex, drawn-out process common to the financial services commission and required that the adjudicators be able and prepared to deal with complex and difficult issues on short notice with little pre-hearing preparation. In addition, decisions were required in a very short time frame.

I also received an appointment from what was then the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency as an independent third-party reviewer, hearing employment disputes at that agency. In fact, I was assigned the first test case in the system, a challenge that entailed developing a hearing process from scratch, since there were no procedural rules then in place.

Subsequently, I was also appointed by the Law Society of Upper Canada to act as a referee in hearings related to the law society's compensation fund. Often, there, as well, claimants were unrepresented. Again, I dealt efficiently with claims against the fund within a strict legislative framework. I wrote detailed recommendations to convocation on the disposition of each matter.

My experience with the Consent and Capacity Board gave me considerable exposure to the sensitivity needed in both mental health issues and the challenges of those caught up in the system, including unrepresented parties. It also reinforced to me the necessity of providing fair and balanced hearings under often difficult circumstances, while respecting the dignity of both the participants and the process.

Since the board usually sat in three-member panels with the lawyer presiding, I also learned how to deal with the dynamics of collective decision-making and how to reach consensus on the issues before us. Even where

there was a dissenting opinion, the lawyer member was expected to be in a position to express that dissent in the written reasons.

Those experiences have sharpened my adjudicative skills and carried through to my home position as an arbitrator and, hopefully, will carry through to the position of vice-chair with this tribunal.

Having adjudicated in a variety of forms in both English and French and having dealt with a wide range of legislative schemes, I feel that I am highly qualified to act as the vice-chair in the appeal tribunal. My adjudicative and linguistic skills, combined with a practical appreciation of the agricultural landscape, provide the necessary foundation for work as a vice-chair.

With retirement from the financial services commission now a reality, I'm looking forward to taking on some new challenges. Thank you very much.

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Amrit Mangat): Thank you, sir.

Now we will move to the questions. First, we will move to the government side. Any questions?

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Chair?

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Amrit Mangat): Mr. Rinaldi.

0910

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I just want to say thank you so much for taking an interest in pursuing this particular function. It's certainly appreciated, and I want to say thank you again. You have an impressive resumé and I'm sure that you'll be able to fulfill the position quite well.

Mr. John Wilson: Thank you.

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Amrit Mangat): Mr. Anderson.

Mr. Granville Anderson: Thank you also, Mr. Wilson, for putting your name forward. I see that you have a wealth of experience in how tribunals work and operate. On average, do you know how many decisions per year that this particular tribunal—

Mr. John Wilson: I'm sorry?

Mr. Granville Anderson: How many decisions per year would you be expected to write?

Mr. John Wilson: I really don't know precisely because it would depend on the allocation of the number of hearings. The tribunal is not one of the most exceptionally busy tribunals in Ontario, so I would suspect that I would be lucky to write a dozen decisions in a year.

Mr. Granville Anderson: Okay. Just as a follow-up, is there a time requirement after the hearing that the decisions have to be released, whether within 30 days or 60 days etc.? Do you know?

Mr. John Wilson: Each tribunal has their own internal rules. To be quite honest, I'm not certain what the absolute requirements are. Obviously, every tribunal should endeavour to have reasons issued under the most timely basis possible, because they owe it to the parties and to the system to avoid tardiness.

Mr. Granville Anderson: That's where I was going. What would you consider a reasonable amount of time to release a decision, do you think?

Mr. John Wilson: It's obviously a function of the complexity of the case. If you're talking about a decision where there is a room full of documentation that is on the record, I think you owe it to the tribunal and to the mandate that has been given to you to give it the time to fully appreciate what is on the record and make a decision that reflects the evidence before you. On a simple one-issue matter, there's no reason that a decision shouldn't be issued within 30 days, but in a very complex matter where the hearing is taking perhaps up to several weeks, I think that would be an unrealistic conclusion.

Mr. Granville Anderson: Okay. Thank you very much.

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Thank you very much, and thank you to the government side. The questioning now goes to the official opposition. Mr. Pettapiece, please.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Welcome, Mr. Wilson. I understand you're from the part of the country where I'm from. You're from the Lucknow area.

Mr. John Wilson: That's right.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Yes, Mr. Paul Henderson territory. I live in Listowel right now, but our farms are located between Monkton and Listowel. You're a farm guy and you had a cow-calf operation at one time?

Mr. John Wilson: At one time. We've dialled back quite a bit. We've got a few sheep and horses and cash crops.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: So do you live out there now?

Mr. John Wilson: Yes.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Oh, do you? Okay.

This tribunal handles complaints to about 18 different acts. It's quite extensive. I don't know how anybody can be knowledgeable about them all. One of them—and maybe you've heard of this—has to do with the Tile Drainage Act. We are having some complaints—in our area, anyway—with the application and especially the interest rate on the Tile Drainage Act. I'm certain that isn't what you would be there for, but this still remains—I think it's 6%, where a lot of farmers go to the bank and get it for a lot less money than that. So that may be something that's going to crash your table as to the fairness of imposing a 6% interest when we certainly all know that the interest rates when going through a financial institution are lower.

You have legal experience in the financial services area. The mandate of the AFRAA Tribunal says that members have specific knowledge of the agency's governing act and related law as well as an understanding of the context within which the agency operates. This means that tribunal members are expected to have a good knowledge of the agricultural sector. I think you've answered that well.

These other acts that I'm talking about: Have you dealt with many of those acts?

Mr. John Wilson: As an adjudicator, of course not. I'm a stranger to this tribunal. In the practice of law, obviously, early on I dealt with many of the issues, mostly under the Drainage Act, because that seems to be one that

has had a long history of raising issues and raising tempers as well.

The legislative landscape is changing all the time. One can enter into an early understanding of an act only to find that your knowledge is rapidly out of date, unless one follows up with it. I think it's incumbent on anyone hearing an issue under an act to review the act and the jurisprudence under that act prior to the hearings so that you're in a place where you're well enough informed to understand the way the issues have developed before you and to, if necessary, ask the necessary questions and make sure that the proper evidence is before you that is relevant to the specific decision you have to make. I think that's saying that, although you must have the specific knowledge of the act, you must also be a generalist and able to be a quick study of the legislation and the jurisprudence in order to deal fairly with a dispute under a specific system.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I can cite you examples from my area where—especially having to do with environmental issues—our farm operations are getting extremely large. I'm sure you're aware of that—where you have people milking up to 600 cows on one operation. So it certainly does raise some environmental concerns.

One of the things that the farmer asks for when an inspector comes out is, "Tell me what you want, and we will do it." We are getting too much of that not happening—where an inspector is able to interpret the rules but not say specifically, "I want that drain put over here," or "I want it put over here." The farmer is left saying, "What do we do?" I have a case of that happening right now where the farmer is just pulling his hair out. He doesn't know what to do in his situation in his very large dairy operation.

So I would hope that this can be addressed. Also, this inspector will have a different view than this inspector does. It drives people nuts when this happens. Maybe you're aware of some of those things happening out in the country.

I think you've answered a lot of the questions I have here as far as your adjudication experience and whatever else. Certainly, I believe that you have a knowledge of the agricultural sector that will certainly help you as you go along.

Did you have any questions?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: No—

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Thank you, Mr. Pettapiece.

We'll now turn it over to Mr. Gates.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Good morning, sir. How are you?

Mr. John Wilson: Very well, thank you.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'm going to start by just asking a question that I usually ask everybody that comes here—you're not special. Have you ever donated to the Liberal Party?

Mr. John Wilson: No, I haven't.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Never?

Mr. John Wilson: Never.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Good—

Mr. James J. Bradley: How about the NDP?

Mr. Wayne Gates: I hope so. Have you ever donated to my campaign, never mind the NDP? Anyway, thank you very much for the answer.

It's my understanding that the mandate of the Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Appeal Tribunal is to provide an independent appeal body under several acts and to have them heard by an impartial and knowledgeable tribunal. How would your experience, particularly your previous experience—and you did touch on this, but I would like you to touch on it on the record—assist you in achieving that mandate with the tribunal?

Mr. John Wilson: When you're presented with a case, you're bringing all your experience from the past as well as your current knowledge that you've gained from, as I mentioned, briefing up on the context of the issues that are before you. I think that there's an adjudication mindset that is really helpful. You develop a habit and an ability to develop and make sure that a process is in place in the hearing that ensures fairness and that ensures that the information that is necessary to make a decision is going to be before you and that you take it properly into consideration.

I think it's very hard to generalize about what you do at a hearing because when you're talking about things as different as agricultural employment issues versus issues arising out of the sale of farm machinery, or drainage, the dynamics are totally different in each one of them. I think you've got to be prepared and able to tailor the process to the type of dispute that you have before you to deal with it efficiently.

0920

Mr. Wayne Gates: How many cases have you written awards for, as an arbitrator?

Mr. John Wilson: I don't know exactly, but several hundred at least.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Just a question I'm a little curious about: Of those, how many were unrepresented? It's interesting that you mentioned that during your opening comments.

Mr. John Wilson: It's interesting because in the Consent and Capacity Board, for example, the parties are the physician who is putting forward the idea that the patient should be detained, and the patient themselves, who is usually represented by a lawyer. The physician is rarely represented. It's an unusual situation in that the state actor is the one who is the unrepresented party.

In most cases that I've had at the Financial Services Commission, for example, I'd say 95% of the cases were represented by legal counsel or paralegals. Certainly the ones where there were individual applicants who were not represented could very easily take up a significant part of your time in adjudication because of the difficulty moving within a formal adjudication system for someone who is not used to the process.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Thank you. In September 2015, the Association of Ontario Chicken Processors, AOCP, filed an appeal against the policies of the Chicken Farmers of Ontario which ration supplies of live chickens

to processors. This is part of a long-standing and broader issue between the two groups, which is based on the merits of their supply management policies, such as the quota system.

In March of last year, the tribunal—this is interesting to me—rescheduled this hearing between the two groups for the fourth time. How would the witness use his past experience to address this contentious issue?

Mr. John Wilson: Well, I'd have to be very careful in addressing that issue because it is in active litigation before the board. Since my intention is to take part in the proceedings of the board, I think I'd have to be awfully careful about that.

What I can say is that there often are very good procedural reasons for why an adjournment has to take place, but we have to always be cognizant of the fact that justice delayed is justice denied, ultimately. I think all tribunals and courts should try to keep that in mind in terms of ensuring that the process is complied with, but in a timely manner, as much as possible.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I appreciate that answer. My follow-up question is, do you believe it's fair to both parties to continually reschedule hearings? Four times rescheduling a hearing, I think, could be a little excessive.

Mr. John Wilson: Well, without knowing the reasons, I don't think I can comment.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I appreciate that, but I just thought I'd say it.

The witness has previous experience with the Financial Services Commission of Ontario and the Law Society of Upper Canada. What motivated the witness to seek this position with the Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Appeal Tribunal?

Mr. John Wilson: I think it's an opportunity because it's not a full-time position. Having withdrawn from the financial services commission, I have the luxury of a little time on my hands. Sometimes, that opportunity is the time to take up your enthusiasms as well. Agriculture has always been an area that, as I said, is viscerally important to me; I have a hard time withdrawing from it. So this is one more chance to serve my community in the context of something that I really enjoy.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Well, it's certainly important to the overall success of our province. There's no doubt about that.

My last question is—I heard you say you are retired or you're going to retire?

Mr. John Wilson: I'm retired.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Congratulations and thanks. Appreciate it.

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Thank you very much, Mr. Wilson. This concludes the allocated time for this interview. Thank you very much. You may step down, and we will consider concurrences following the next interview.

Mr. John Wilson: Thank you very much.

MR. RAM CHOPRA

Review of intended appointment, selected by third party: Ram Chopra, intended appointee as member, Council of the Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario.

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Our next intended appointee today is Mr. Ram Chopra, nominated as member, Council of the Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario. Please come forward and have a seat at the table. Thank you. Welcome and thank you very much for being here this morning, Mr. Chopra. You may begin with a brief statement, if you wish.

Members of each party will then have 10 minutes to ask you questions. Any time used from your statement will be deducted from the government's time for questioning, and when that happens, we will be starting questioning with the official opposition. Good morning. You may begin.

Mr. Ram Chopra: Good morning, Madam Chair and members of the committee. I'm honoured to be here this morning to present my background and qualifications to assist you in determining the appointment to the Ontario college of dental surgeons. In the next few minutes, I would like to present my skills and let you determine how I can be an effective member of this committee.

Madam Chair, my work experience spans across three provinces: Saskatchewan, Ontario and Alberta. I joined the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs in the district of North Battleford, Saskatchewan, in 1970 as district supervisor of social services responsible for managing social services programs in the district's different First Nations communities. In the span of five years that I worked there, my major achievements were upgrading the skills of social services staff. I established a review system of the social assistance appeal system and also repatriated First Nations children who were placed in different towns and cities, to bring them back to their communities or other First Nations communities.

In 1975, I was promoted to the regional manager's position of Ontario region responsible for social development programs to First Nations communities in Ontario under a federal-provincial welfare agreement of 1965. The services to First Nations were extended on the same basis as municipalities. I found that the principle under the 1965 welfare agreement was quite good, but the services were not that effective and they were not culturally appropriate.

So in consultation with my headquarters in Ottawa I initiated a major study of social services under this agreement, and the result was extensive changes to some of the services, specifically child and family services where the act was amended to include a major portion—how to deal with First Nations children, as well as the act allowed First Nations and tribal councils to establish their own children's aid societies.

0930

I also utilized a secondment opportunity with the Ministry of Health whereby they were reforming the long-term-care system. I was there to help in that process.

I took an early retirement, Madam Chair, in 1997, and I established a consulting business for myself. I was contacted by the Ontario Human Rights Commission to deal with backlog cases.

I also served on a First Nations—Samson Cree Nation in Alberta, which was quite different. I was sitting on the other side, and I was able to see how they dealt with federal and provincial governments. I was responsible for managing a multiservice agency, including a children's aid society.

In 2004, Madam Chair, I was appointed to the Consent and Capacity Board, and simultaneously, in 2006, I was appointed by the federal government as chair of the Board of Referees, to deal with appeals under the Employment Insurance Act.

In 2016, last year, I was also appointed by the city of Mississauga to their Mississauga Appeal Tribunal, to deal with cases under licensing bylaws, as well as animal care and protection bylaws.

So I have worked on all three levels: federal, provincial and municipal.

I should give you a little bit about my community involvement. I have lived in the city of Mississauga for the last 37 years. I was the founding chair of the India Rainbow Community Services of Peel, which is one of the largest community organizations in Ontario serving women, seniors, youth, immigrants and newcomers. It has three branches now. It has grown really big.

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): You have three minutes.

Mr. Ram Chopra: Okay. Also, I have fundraised for the YMCA and the Credit Valley Hospital.

I am also involved with, and was the founder and member of, the Asha Jyoti Community Welfare Society of Canada, a non-profit organization helping give educational scholarships to children back in India.

These are some of the things. I'm prepared to answer any questions from the members. Thank you for your time.

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Thank you very much, Mr. Chopra. We are now going to begin our questions with the—let me try to get my stopwatch fixed here.

Mr. Pettapiece begins, right?

Interjection.

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Yes, it's with you, the official opposition.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I thought you said the member of the third party. I've just got one here.

Good morning.

Mr. Ram Chopra: Good morning.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I hope I've got things in order here now. But anyway, are you still a member of the Liberal Party, sir?

Mr. Ram Chopra: I am not.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: You're not a member. You haven't been—

Mr. Ram Chopra: No, I am not.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Okay. Objectivity and impartiality are very important with any committee that you're involved with. You're probably going to face situations where that's going to be difficult, for whatever reason. I wonder how you would handle situations like that.

You spoke of your experience with First Nations. I'm sure there were some very emotional things that happened there where you had to make some pretty difficult decisions as to what we were going to do. I just wonder, sir, how did you do things like that?

Mr. Ram Chopra: The college really operates its mandate through committees. With any conflict that might arise, I have to be very objective in my approach. I have handled, in serving the three levels of government, their votes, and I have come across no such situation where it was really difficult for me to handle.

I mean, are you asking for a political—

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: No, no. I guess my question is, it's sometimes difficult when you serve on committees like this, that emotions get involved and then you have to make decisions that can be quite difficult. That's what I'm getting at. I just wonder how you handle that type of thing.

Mr. Ram Chopra: Well, I think when decisions are to be made, particularly when we go into the phase of deliberations, you express everything, what information you have listened to or gathered through the evidence provided, written or verbal. You express everything in the deliberations and you arrive at a decision with the definite fact-finding, and there are laws to govern those. So, based on those two things, we have to decide and take decisions on any issues.

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Yes, Mr. Oosterhoff.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: My colleague touched on something really important. He started off asking if you're still a member of the Liberal Party. I'm just curious: Have you ever in the past few years donated to the Ontario Liberal Party?

Mr. Ram Chopra: Have I—

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Donated—

Mr. Ram Chopra: No, not me. Not myself, no.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Okay. There was someone by your name who had donated in 2014.

Mr. Ram Chopra: No, no. Not myself.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: That's completely okay.

Mr. Ram Chopra: But maybe other family members might have.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Perhaps.

So I'm just curious. What would you see as the main focus of this Council of the Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario?

Mr. Ram Chopra: Well, it's a self-governing college to provide protection, rights of the public to ensure that they receive dental services, oral health services, with respect and sensitivity. They also govern their dental field so that all the dentists in Ontario who are registered

receive education and guidance to upgrade their skills so that they are up to date in their dealing with the public.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I'm just thinking that not a lot of people like going to the dentist. I know I'm one of them. So what made you decide, "This is something I want to do"? I know it's not going to the dentist, but why is this something that you feel is very important and something you want to be a part of?

Mr. Ram Chopra: Well, first of all, I want to be a very productive member of society and want to be contributing towards improving the quality of life in Ontario. I also find that with my quasi-judicial experience, my skills and experience in that field, I believe I can contribute very effectively to meet the mandate of this organization.

0940

Another thing which is very different here: The college actually fulfills its mandate through seven statutory committees under the Regulated Health Professionals Act. The committee work gives you enough preparation time and gives you full involvement in taking decisions.

I am comparing that with my experience at the Consent and Capacity Board, where we would go to a facility and the psychiatrist would give us a number of reports that we would have to read within 20 minutes or half an hour, and make a decision based on that.

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Three minutes.

Mr. Ram Chopra: The individual patient representative will present information, but again, it's an instant decision based on whatever is in front of you. But here, the committee work gives you preparation time, and you are involved in the whole process very effectively.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: One more question: What do you think is going to be the most challenging aspect of being on this council for you?

Mr. Ram Chopra: I believe my experience in dealing with complaints and appeals—I don't know which committee I would be serving, but my challenge would be to get involved in a committee like discipline, because I believe that people have to really deal with complaints. There are a lot of people who are unable to deal with those complaints, and I feel I can be very effective in a committee like discipline.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Thank you.

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Thank you, Mr. Oosterhoff. We're now going on to Mr. Gates, please.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Good morning, sir. How are you?

Mr. Ram Chopra: Good morning. Very good, thank you.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Good. I was listening to your comments. You said you worked at all three levels of government?

Mr. Ram Chopra: Well, I worked with the federal government mainly, if you're talking about my work experience. I was on a secondment with the Ministry of Health, provincial, at the time when they were reforming long-term care. At the municipal level, I am serving on the Mississauga Appeal Tribunal. So that's how I have exposure to all three levels.

Mr. Wayne Gates: What was your favourite?

Mr. Ram Chopra: The province. The provincial government.

Interjections.

Mr. Wayne Gates: What's that?

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Provincial.

Mr. Ram Chopra: Well, I think I enjoy all three levels, in fact. You know, I was chair with the federal Board of Referees.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I've never done federal, but I've done two now. I certainly have my favourite as well. But they're all different, right?

Mr. Ram Chopra: Yes.

Mr. Wayne Gates: They're very different.

Mr. Ram Chopra: Yes. At the municipal level, we were dealing with bylaws, the local issues, but I enjoyed all three levels.

Mr. Wayne Gates: That's good.

It's my understanding that the witness has previous experience as a former regional manager of social development serving First Nations communities in Ontario, Saskatchewan and Alberta, and as Chair of the Human Resources Development Canada Board of Referees. Could you describe your previous experience on the governing boards that might be of assistance for undertaking this position as vice-chair?

Mr. Ram Chopra: The three boards that I served on—federally, I was chair of the board of referees, conducting appeals under the Employment Insurance Act. There, in the appeals system, I would gather evidence, written and verbal, I would fact-find everything based on information provided, I would deliberate in the three-member committee and I would come to a fair decision based on the information provided.

At the Consent and Capacity Board, of course, we went to psychiatric facilities, dealt with persons with mental disorders and took decisions, again, based on the information. At the Mississauga Appeal Tribunal, I handled cases which were violations of city licensing bylaws and animal care and protection bylaws.

With these three levels of quasi-judicial hearings, I believe I bring a lot of experience in dealing with any of the committee work or council work I will be involved with.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Thanks. With your lack of dentistry experience, do you believe that you'll receive training from the board—any training at all?

Mr. Ram Chopra: Most of the boards that I served on generally had some orientation program. I have read a lot of information online. Certainly, some orientation in some of the laws that are applicable to dentistry would be helpful. Some orientation would be helpful, but I can start even with whatever background I have and the information that I read online. It would be quite sufficient to start.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Thank you for that.

The Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario has established a number of committees, and five standing committees serve an important function in the operation of the college's programs and services. The Inquiries,

Complaints and Reports Committee received 653 letters, of which 464 became actual formal complaints in 2015 alone—it sounds like a high number. Has the witness been given any indication about the time commitment required by this appointment and is he confident that he can provide the necessary time? It seems to be a growing number of complaints.

Mr. Ram Chopra: Yes. This committee's function is very important. They receive all the complaints, and the committee decides whether there is enough evidence that the complaints should be forwarded to the complaints committee. So I think this particular committee needs to be very effectively working to ensure that the complaints are reviewed properly and forwarded to the appropriate committee to deal further in that.

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Mr. Wayne Gates: I appreciate that, but I guess my question was that, when you take a look at the number of complaint letters and when you take a look at the ones that actually became formal complaints in 2015, about 70% of all letters—

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): You have three minutes.

Mr. Wayne Gates: —okay, thank you—ended up being actually formal complaints. So I guess my question is to you is—because it seems like it's growing; it's getting bigger and more people are complaining. Not only are they complaining; they're going to have their complaints heard. Do you have the time? That was my question. Will you be able to allocate the amount of time that's necessary for this particular board?

Mr. Ram Chopra: Well, I don't know the composition of the members and how they actually deal with that volume of complaints, but I believe I have enough time to devote to deal with whatever time commitment is required. I will have enough time to deal with that; no problem.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Very good. Thank you, sir.

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Thank you, Mr. Gates. We'll now turn it over to Ms. Mangat. You've got two minutes and 11 seconds.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Thank you, Chair. Actually I have a comment; no question.

Thank you, Mr. Chopra, for coming to Queen's Park and appearing before committee. As you said in your statement, I know you're quite involved in the community in Mississauga, especially in fundraising for Credit Valley Hospital and fundraising for YMCA in Mississauga. I know you have been involved in Carassauga, which is a multicultural festival in Mississauga. Thank you very much. I really appreciate your showing support and leadership for our community. Keep up the good work.

Mr. Ram Chopra: Thank you very much, Ms. Mangat.

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): If there are no further questions? Thank you, Mr. Chopra. You may step down. This concludes the time allocated for this interview.

Mr. Ram Chopra: Thank you very much.

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): We will now consider the concurrence for Mr. John Wilson, nominated as member and vice-chair, Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Appeal Tribunal and member, Board of Negotiation.

Would someone please move the concurrence? Mr. Qaadri, please.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move concurrence in the intended appointment of John Wilson, nominated as member and vice-chair, Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Appeal Tribunal and member, Board of Negotiation.

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Are there any discussions? All in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried. Congratulations, Mr. Wilson.

We will now consider the concurrence for Mr. Ram Chopra, nominated as member, Council of the Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario. Would someone please move the concurrence? Mr. Qaadri, please.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move concurrence in the intended appointment of Ram Chopra, nominated as member of the Council of the Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario.

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Any discussion? All in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried. Congratulations, Mr. Chopra.

Mr. Ram Chopra: Thank you.

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): We now have a number of deadline extensions that I'd like to go through. Perhaps you can follow in the spreadsheet that was handed out by the Clerk. I will read each one individually, as I think that is the best way to follow through, because I'm going to read them in an order that's different, actually, than in that spreadsheet.

Do we have unanimous agreement to extend the deadline to consider the intended appointment of John Wilson, nominated as member and vice-chair, Agriculture—oh, sorry. Let me go back.

Do we have unanimous agreement to extend the deadline to consider the intended appointment of Marguerite Pigott, nominated as vice-chair, Ontario Media Development Corporation? Her certificate from November 4, 2016, expires today, Feb. 21, 2017, and we're seeking to extend it to March 23, 2017. Unanimous agreement? Yes? Perfect.

Do we have unanimous agreement to extend the deadline to consider the intended appointment of Pareshkumar Jariwala, nominated as member, Grant Review Team—Essex, Kent and Lambton—Ontario Trillium Foundation? The certificate from November 18, 2016, expires today, February 21, 2017. We're seeking to extend it to March 23, 2017. Unanimous consent or agreement? Yes? Carried.

Do we have unanimous agreement to extend the deadline to consider the intended appointment of Phyllis Tanaka, nominated as member, Grant Review Team—Toronto—Ontario Trillium Foundation? Her certificate from November 18, 2016, expires today, February 21,

2017. We're seeking to extend the certificate to March 23, 2017. Do we have unanimous agreement? Yes.

Do we have unanimous agreement to extend the deadline to consider the intended appointment of Jo-Anne Poirier, nominated as member, Ontario Educational Communications Authority (TVO)? Her certificate from November 18, 2016, expires today, February 21, 2017. We're seeking to extend it to March 23, 2017. Do we have unanimous agreement? Yes, perfect.

Do we have unanimous agreement to extend the deadline to consider the intended appointment of Kevin Gordon Cleghorn, nominated as member, Criminal Injuries Compensation (Social Justice Tribunals Ontario)? His certificate from November 25, 2016, expires today, February 21, 2017. We're seeking to extend it to March 23, 2017. Do we have unanimous agreement? Yes, perfect.

Do we have unanimous agreement to extend the deadline to consider the intended appointment of Norma Lamont, nominated as member, Grant Review Team—Champlain—Ontario Trillium Foundation? Her certificate from November 25, 2016, expires today, February 21, 2017. We're seeking to extend it to March 23, 2017. Do we have unanimous agreement? Yes, perfect.

Do we have unanimous agreement to extend the deadline to consider the intended appointment of William Greenhalgh, nominated as vice-chair, Public Accountants Council for the Province of Ontario? We're seeking to extend his certificate, which expires today, to March 23, 2017. Do we have unanimous agreement? Yes, perfect.

Do we have unanimous agreement to extend the deadline to consider the intended appointment of Rumina Velshi, nominated as member, Ontario Energy Board? Her certificate from December 16, 2016, expires today, February 21, 2017. Do we have unanimous agreement to extend her certificate to March 23, 2017? Thank you.

Do we have unanimous agreement to extend the deadline to consider the intended appointment of Linda Robinson, nominated as chair, Ontario Infrastructure and Lands Corporation (Infrastructure Ontario)? Her certificate from December 16, 2016, expires today. Do we have unanimous agreement to extend her certificate to March 23, 2017? Perfect.

Do we have unanimous agreement to extend the deadline to consider the intended appointment of Carol Layton, nominated as member, Ontario Infrastructure and Lands Corporation (Infrastructure Ontario)? Her certificate from December 16, 2016, expires today. Do we have unanimous agreement to extend it to March 23, 2017? Thank you.

Do we have unanimous agreement to extend the deadline to consider the intended appointment of Kathy Bardswick, nominated as member, Metrolinx? Her certificate from December 16, 2016, expires today. Do we have unanimous agreement to extend it to March 23, 2017? Thank you very much.

I believe that is all of our work for today. The committee is now adjourned. Thank you.

The committee adjourned at 0959.



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